WSET Level 3 Award in Wines

A world of knowledge

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Session 14

Sparkling Wines

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Methods of introducing CO_2 into wine

What makes it sparkle?

- Carbonation
- Retaining CO_2 produced during fermentation
  - CO_2 produced during the partial fermentation of juice in sealed tank or bottle remains in wine (Asti method, Ancestral method).
  - CO_2 from 2nd fermentation of a still wine either in bottle or tank remains in wine.

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Key vineyard and winery factors

- grapes
- climate
- harvest
- pressing
- base wine
- blending
- wine ready for 2nd fermentation in bottle or tank
- sweetness

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Styles of sparkling wines

- Non-vintage (NV)
- Vintage
- *Blanc de Blancs*
- *Blanc de Noirs*
- Brut Nature
- Brut
- Demi-Sec

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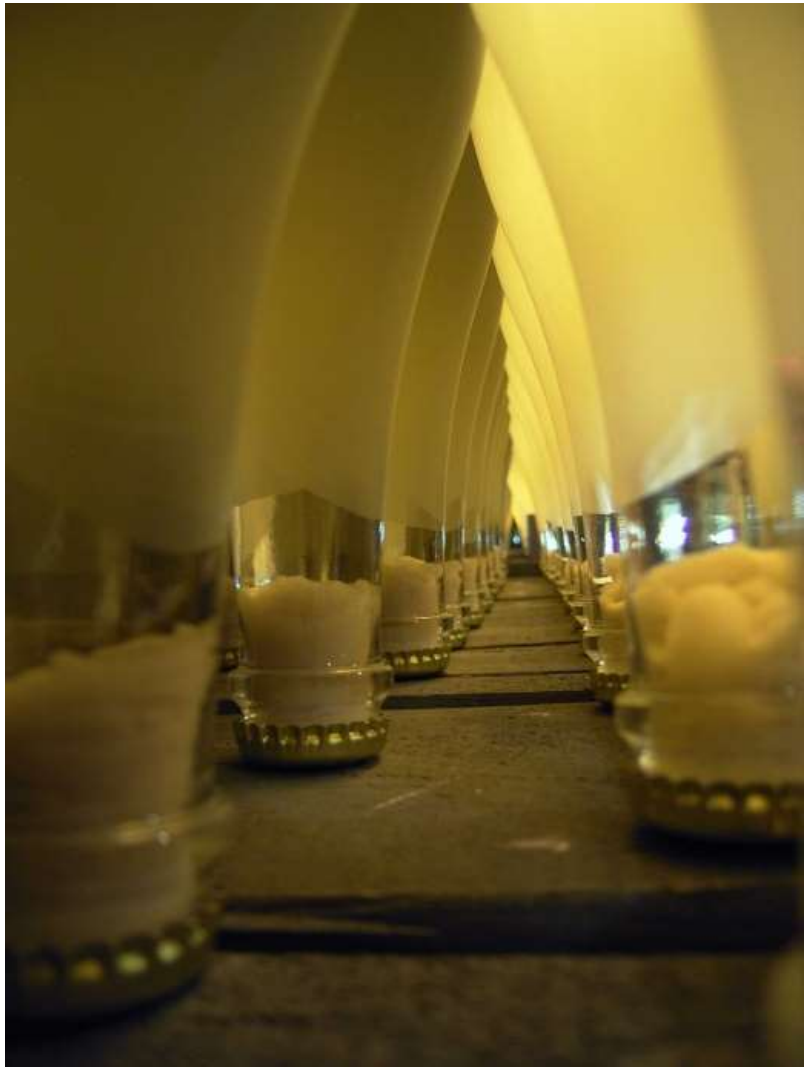
Traditional method

- hand-picked grapes
- gentle pressing
- 1st fermentation
- blending
- 2nd fermentation in bottle
  - *liqueur de tirage*
- yeast autolysis
- riddling & disgorgement
- dosage
  - *liqueur d'expédition*
- bottle ageing



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Champagne

Climate

- cool continental
- risk winter freeze, spring frost
- cloud and rain

Vineyard

- chalk soils

Grape varieties

- Chardonnay
- Pinot Noir
- Meunier

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Regions of Champagne

Montagne de Reims

Pinot Noir

Vallée de la Marne

Meunier

Côte des Blancs

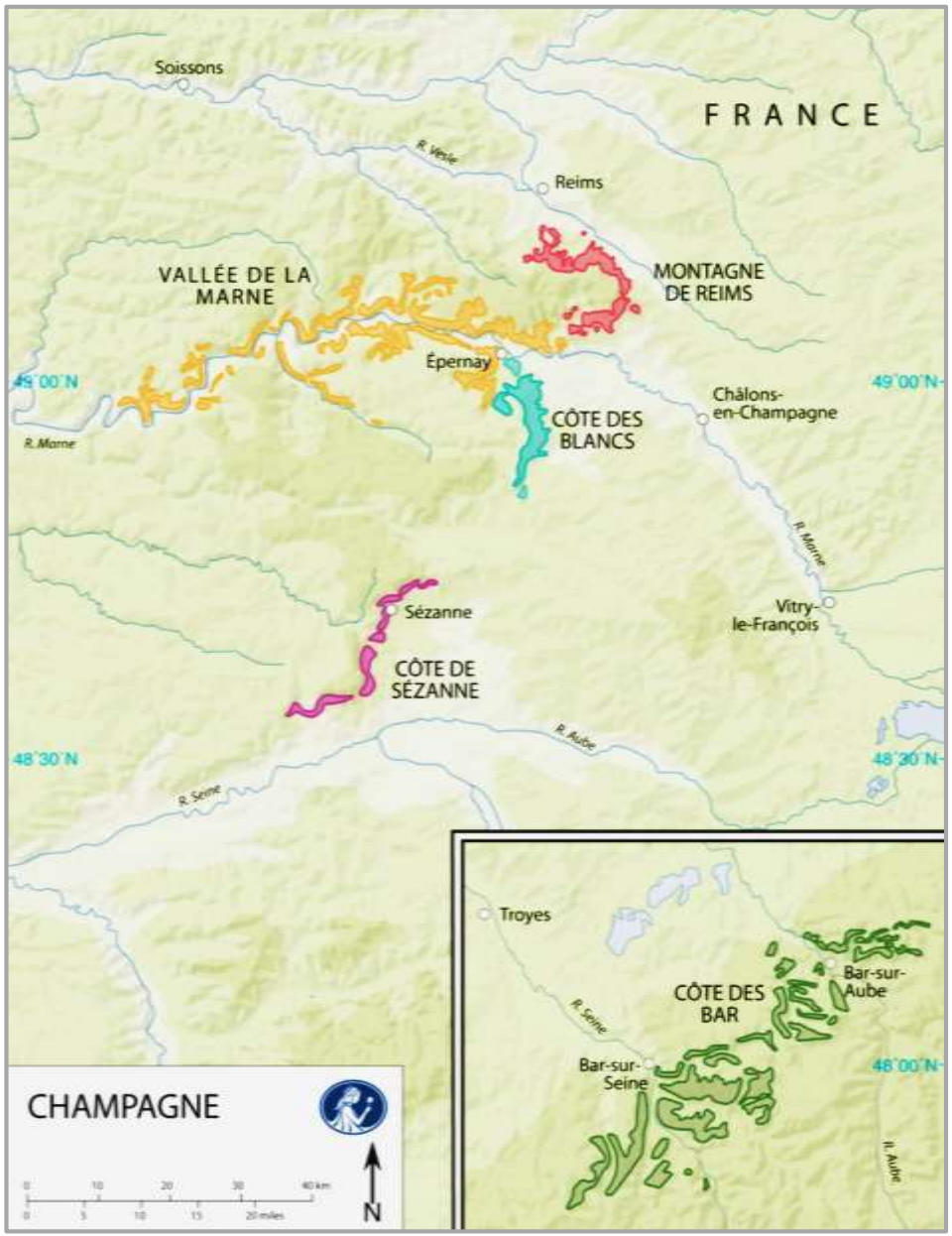
Chardonnay

Côte de Sézanne

Chardonnay

Côtes des Bar

Pinot Noir



Classification

- *grand* and *premier cru*
- village not vineyard

Systematic Approach to Tasting

APPEARANCE		
Intensity		pale – medium – deep
Colour	*white*	lemon-green – lemon – gold – amber – brown
	rosé	pink – salmon – orange
	red	purple – ruby – garnet – tawny – brown

NOSE	
Intensity	light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – pronounced
Aroma characteristics	
Primary	
Secondary	
Tertiary	
Development	youthful – developing – fully developed – tired/past its best

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PALATE	
Sweetness	dry – off-dry – medium-dry – medium-sweet – sweet – luscious
Acidity	low – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – high
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Systematic Approach to Tasting

CONCLUSIONS ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY				
Quality level	faulty – poor – acceptable – good – very good – outstanding			
Balance				
Length				
Intensity				
Complexity				
Level of readiness for drinking / potential for aging	too young	can drink now, but has potential for ageing	drink now: not suitable for ageing or further ageing	too old

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Crémant and other French sparkling wines

Crémant
Alsace
Bourgogne

Loire
Saumur
Vouvray
Crémant de Loire

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Cava

Production

- traditional method

Grape varieties

- Macabeo
- Xarel·lo
- Parellada
- Chardonnay and Pinot Noir

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Premium Sparkling from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, USA

Common challenges

- achieve flavour ripeness without high alcohol
- retain acidity
- cool climates

Grape varieties

- Pinot Noir and Chardonnay

USA	*South Africa*	*Australia*	*New Zealand*
Carneros Anderson Valley	Western Cape (Cap Classique)	Tasmania Yarra Valley Adelaide Hills	Marlborough

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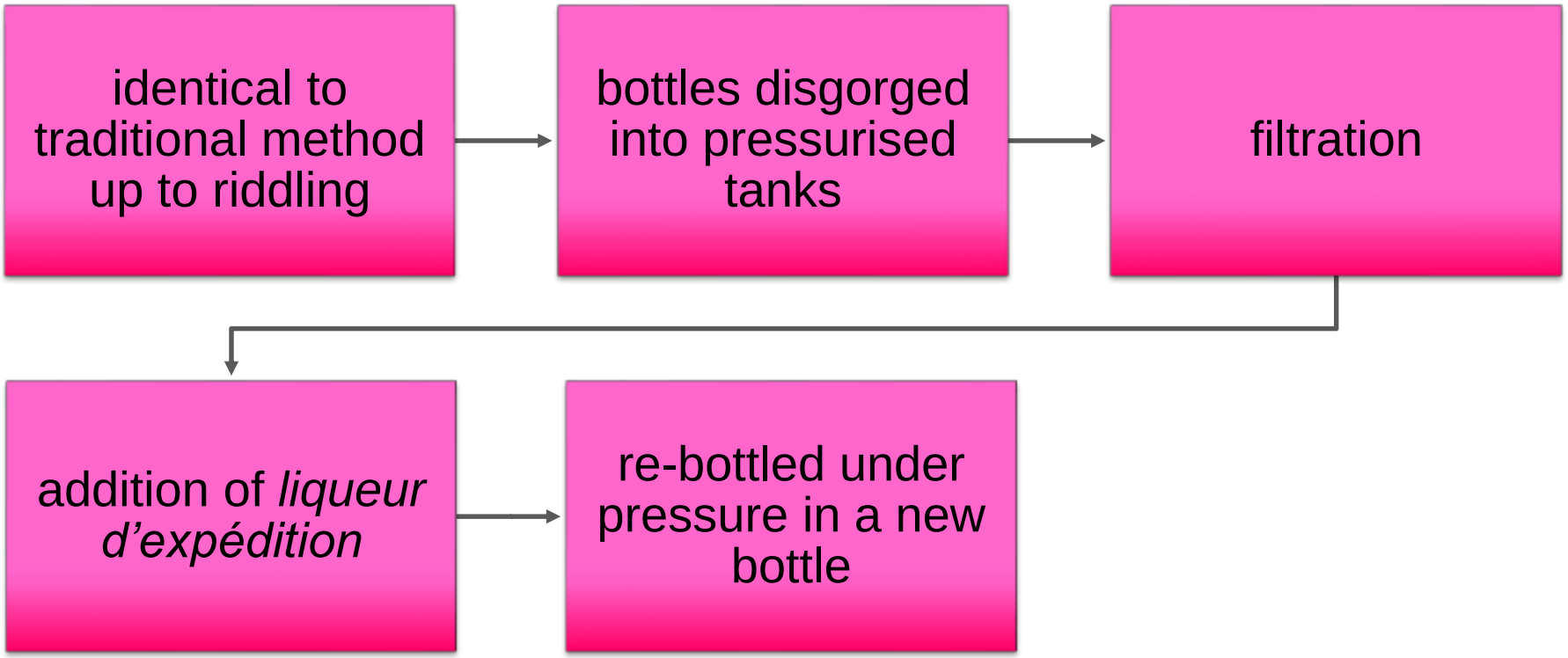
Transfer Method


identical to traditional method up to riddling
bottles disgorged into pressurised tanks
filtration
addition of *liqueur d'expédition*
re-bottled under pressure in a new bottle

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Ancestral Method

- single fermentation
- bottle partially-fermented juice
- fermentation continues in bottle, trapping CO_2
- may or may not be disgorged

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Tank Method

- 2nd fermentation in pressurised tank
- wine filtered
- bottled under pressure

- differences from bottle fermentation
  - less autolytic character
  - ideal for aromatic varieties

Prosecco

Prosecco DOC

Conegliano Valdobbiadene DOCG

Production

- tank method

Grape variety

- Glera

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Sekt

Production

- mainly tank method

Deutscher Sekt

- base wine from Germany
- best wines usually made from Riesling

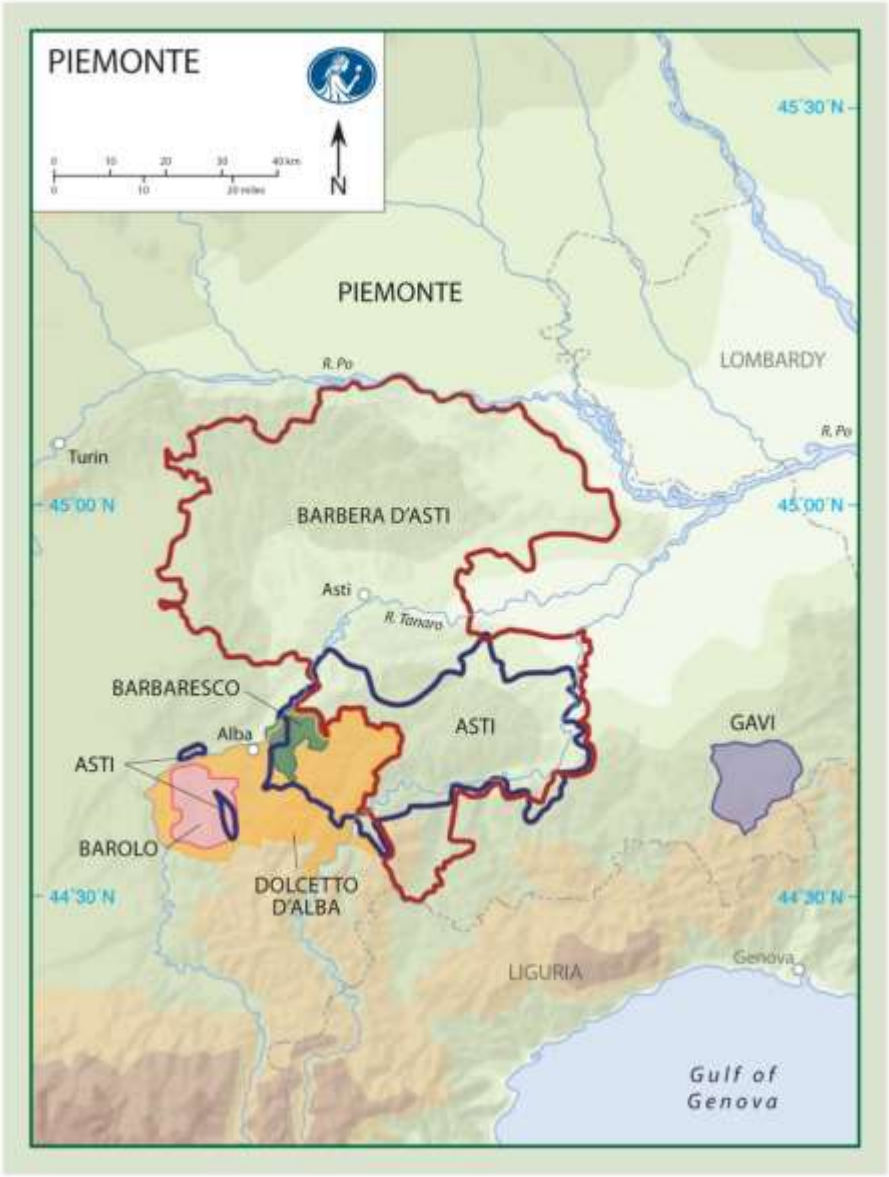
Asti

Grape varieties

- Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains

Method

- variation of tank method
- one fermentation ***only***
- chilled must stored
- ferment to order
- stopped at 7–7.5 % abv
- unfermented sugar = sweet
- filtered & bottled



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